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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIJING 005139

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [CH](#)

SUBJECT: HU JINTAO ATTENDING BEIDAIHE MEETINGS TO DISCUSS LEADERSHIP ISSUES, CONTACTS SAY

REF: A. SHANGHAI 485

- [1B.](#) 06 BEIJING 14361
- [1C.](#) FBIS CPP20030720000001
- [1D.](#) 04 BEIJING 12465
- [1E.](#) 03 BEIJING 10404

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Aubrey Carlson.
Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

[11.](#) (C) President Hu Jintao will attend, or may have already attended, meetings at the resort town of Beidaihe to discuss leadership personnel arrangements in advance of the 17th Party Congress, according to two Embassy contacts. President Hu previously had "quietly" attended Beidaihe meetings at least once since becoming General Secretary for the sole purpose of discussing personnel matters, one contact reported, even though he had since 2003 "cancelled" the traditional Beidaihe work meetings in which large portions of the Chinese Party and Government had moved to the seaside resort for the summer. In contrast, another contact thought this year would mark Hu's first appearance as General Secretary at Beidaihe, reflecting the importance of the

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upcoming Party Congress, which takes place only once every five years. End Summary.

Hu Jintao to Beidaihe?

[12.](#) (C) President Hu Jintao will attend, or may have already attended, meetings at the resort town of Beidaihe in Hebei Province to discuss leadership personnel arrangements in advance of the 17th Party Congress, according to Yu Jiafu (strictly protect) recently retired Senior Editor and Director General of Foreign Affairs at Xinhua (New China News Agency). Yu recently told Poloff he was unsure of the dates of any meeting but thought that Hu Jintao would likely travel to the seaside resort "several times over the next few weeks" to participate in personnel-related meetings there. Separately, Ma Licheng (strictly protect), former senior editorial writer for the People's Daily, told Poloffs he had also heard that Hu Jintao would be in Beidaihe this summer to discuss leadership arrangements, though he also was unsure as to timing.

[13.](#) (C) Commenting on Hu Jintao's cancellation of the Beidaihe meetings since 2003 as a way of conveying a more open, pragmatic style of leadership (Refs C-E), Yu said his understanding was that this would be at least the second year after 2003 that Hu would "quietly" attend meetings at Beidaihe. Yu thought the prior "cancellation" of the meetings referred only to ending the previous practice of

moving large portions of the Party and Government to Beidaihe for the summer, as had been done under Hu's predecessors, whereas Hu's attendance was solely for the purpose of attending meetings on personnel issues. Whatever the case, any travel by Hu to Beidaihe would likely remain a "sec-ret," and Party propaganda organs would do their utmost to prevent his travel from becoming public, Yu speculated. Meanwhile, Ma Licheng thought this year would mark Hu's first appearance at Beidaihe since becoming Party General Secretary in 2003. The "crucial" personnel arrangements at this fall's Party Congress, which will determine the Party's top positions for the next five years, are so important that Hu has found it necessary to negotiate with other senior Party members at Beidaihe over the arrangements, Ma opined.

Comment

¶4. (C) Given the importance of this fall's Party Congress, Hu Jintao may have felt compelled to travel to Beidaihe to discuss personnel issues, thereby taking advantage of an opportunity to seek consensus with the rest of the leadership on arrangements for the Party's top slots. Even if Hu does travel to Beidaihe, however, it is highly unlikely that all personnel decisions would be made this far in advance. As both Yu Jiafu and Ma Licheng recently cautioned, it is quite likely that no "final" decisions have been made, and whatever arrangements are being discussed could change "right up to the last minute."

RANDT